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2020-05-14

Elmgren , A 2020 , ' Visual Stereotypes of Tatars in the Finnish Press from the 1890s to the 1910s ' , Studia Orientalia Electronica , vol. 8 , no. 2 , pp. 25-39 . https://doi.org/10.23993/store.82942

http://hdl.handle.net/10138/333286
https://doi.org/10.23993/store.82942

Studia Orientalia Electronica

VISUAL STEREOTYPES OF TATARS IN THE FINNISH PRESS FROM THE 1890S TO THE 1910S

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Visual stereotypes constitute a set of tropes through which the Other is described and depicted to an audience, who perhaps never will encounter the individuals that those tropes purport to represent. Upon the arrival of Muslim Tatar traders in Finland in the late nineteenth century, newspapers and satirical journals utilized visual stereotypes to identify the new arrivals and draw demarcation lines between them and what was considered "Finnish". The Tatars arrived during a time of tension in the relationship between the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland and the Russian Empire, with the Finnish intelligentsia divided along political and language lines. Stereotypical images of Tatar pedlars were used as insults against political opponents within Finland and as covert criticism of the policies of the Russian Empire. Stereotypes about ethnic and religious minorities like the Tatars fulfilled a political need for substitute enemy images; after Finland became independent in 1917, these visual stereotypes almost disappeared.

INTRODUCTION

In the European satirical press of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, visual stereotypes were established that are still recognizable to the general public. Others have been forgotten or actively suppressed, especially ethnic and racial stereotypes. Earlier studies on the Finnish satirical press have sometimes dismissed racial stereotypes as foreign influence or defined them simply as a convention of the period (Mylläri 1983: 158). Other studies have taken visual stereotypes seriously and discussed the participation of Finns in the scientific validation and popular dissemination of such stereotypes (Isaksson 2001; Forsgård 2002). Historians have used political cartoons in particular to explore Finnish self-images or auto-stereotypes (Karemaa 1998; Valenius 2004; Elmgren 2008). Visual stereotyping of Finns by others has also been studied (Kemiläinen 1998; Apo 1998). In comparison with the efforts of, for example, Swedish historian Lars M. Andersson, whose massive work on antisemitic caricatures in the Swedish pictorial press is unsurpassed, much remains to be done in Finland in the field of racial and racist stereotyping (Andersson 2000).

My objective here is to explore the construction of a visual stereotype of Tatar pedlars and merchants in the satirical press in Finland. I focus on visual stereotypes in cartoons and caricatures as an expression of a localized international discourse on racial hierarchies, but also as a way of covert political communication where the overt target – itinerant Tatar traders – became collateral damage. Cartoons in satirical magazines reveal discursive practises, including ethnic and racial stereotypes,

Volume 8(2) (2020), pp. 25–39
DOI 10.23993/store.82942

ISSN: 2323-5209

Finnish Oriental Society

utilized by popular humour in order to make sense of a rapidly changing society. In her study on Viennese *Witzblätter* in the late nineteenth century, Heidi Hakkarainen (2019: 8–13) has convincingly argued for the value of humorous and satirical magazines as source material especially for the study of the formation of modern urban culture. The Finnish satirical press dealt with the same material as the Viennese magazines: through the guise of humour, it was possible to comment on sensitive political topics in an otherwise strictly regulated public sphere.

In the late nineteenth century, attitudes in the Finnish press towards minorities and foreigners, particularly peoples defined as "Eastern", were influenced to some degree by factors beyond national borders. Similarities between Finno-Ugric, Turkic (including Tatar) and Mongolian languages inspired philologists to theorize about their interrelations since the eighteenth century (Kemiläinen 1998: 65–66). Russian imperial support of advocates of the Finnish language in the 1880s was motivated by the belief that Finnish, as a more primitive language than Swedish, would be easier to replace with Russian (Polvinen 1984: 171–172).

In the nineteenth century, Finnish and Hungarian anthropologists attempted to debunk Western and Central European characterizations of Finno-Ugric peoples as "Asiatic" barbarians (Manias 2009: 753; Górny 2018: 475–476). The "Asiatic" stigma also influenced Finnish views on minorities and Others. When classifying minorities like the Sámi, Finnish anthropologists used the same theories about racial hierarchies that they contested when foreign anthropologists ranked Finns unfavourably (Isaksson 2001: 20). As a parallel, Russians subscribing to their Empire's civilizing mission could agree with the writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky: "In Europe, we are Tatars, but in Asia we, too, are Europeans" (Kappeler 2001: 208).

THE SATIRICAL PRESS

Although my materials include all the digitized periodicals available in the Finnish National Library's digital archives, the satirical press is the main topic of this study. As Lars M. Andersson (2001: 189–191) states in his research on antisemitic caricatures and stereotypes in the Swedish satirical press, humorous magazines were not a marginal media phenomenon around the turn of the twentieth century. The satirical press addressed an urban mass audience and commented on current issues, such as cultural and political topics and news items (Uino 1986: 259–260). The Finnish satirical pictorials were inspired by Swedish and German predecessors, which filled the gap between the news press – rarely illustrated – and other illustrated publications for mass audiences (Uino 1992: 78).

Despite a formal abolition of censorship in Finland in 1906, the press was kept under surveillance by the authorities. In 1913, for instance, cartoonist Eric Vasström was sentenced to three months in prison for *lèse-majesté*. He had depicted a Russian noblewoman dancing with a Finnish commoner with exaggerated, racialized features (Ylönen 2001: 96, 101). Vasström was a contributor to the Swedish-language, Helsinki-based magazine *Fyren* (1898–1922), which styled itself an organ for social satire and for "free expressions in word and image". Its editor, Rafael Lindqvist, was an active publisher with a wide network of contacts. Despite Lindqvist's idiosyncratic political stances, his publications were popular. He was an enthusiastic translator of Russian literature, a supporter of Alexander Kerensky's Provisional Government after the February Revolution in 1917, fiercely anti-German (excepting the Civil War months in 1918) and a virulent, conspiratorial antisemite. *Fyren* was a forum for criticism and gossip in the world of the Helsinki literati. Before Finland's independence in 1917, it was often the target of censorship and official warnings as well (Leino-Kaukiainen 1992: 121).

The Finnish-language *Tuulispää* (1903–1957) was the most long-lived of the satirical magazines mentioned in this study. It was founded after the sudden abolition of its predecessor title *Matti Meikäläinen* by Governor General Bobrikov in the summer of 1899 (Leino-Kaukiainen 1992: 121; Neuvonen 2018: 142). An organ for conservative nationalism, it toned down its criticism of Russia, but attacked the labour movement and the Swedish-speaking elite. *Tuulispää* was *Fyren*'s ideological opponent in the conflict between the Swedish and Finnish languages, but many artists worked for both publications, such as the Swedish-speaking Topi Vikstedt, Oscar Furuhjelm and Eric Vasström.

The Finnish-language, Socialist *Kurikka* (1904–1954) started out as a newspaper of the labour movement, but soon developed into a richly illustrated satirical magazine that also published readers' contributions (Uino 1986: 260). As a publication of the workers and the Social Democratic Party, it was intended to function as a political agitation channel. *Kurikka*'s illustrators included many non-Socialists, such as Eric Vasström and Hjalmar Löfving. Typically, an artist would offer drawings to any paying customer, regardless of political opinion. If the message suited the editorial line, the artist's background was less important (Uino 1986: 266).

The previously mentioned titles were all relatively concentrated in the capital of Helsinki (Helsingfors). My sources also include some titles from other parts of the country, all accessible via the digital archives of the Finnish National Library. The titles above serve as examples of the media climate and the opportunities of publishing around the turn of the twentieth century in Finland.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE OTHER

Exploring the history of visual stereotypes can be difficult to distinguish from the study of a certain discourse about sensing and perceiving. With an interesting turn of phrase, film scholar Anu Koivunen (1995: 32) has referred to images as "unclean, polyphonic and dialogical", not static structures of power. I analyse textual and pictorial images of Tatars as multi-sensorial representations, which did not always successfully convey their message and which even today can be read apologetically rather than judgmentally, because we lack full knowledge about the context.

The intertextual and visual references of these images need to be studied within their historical context. By using the concepts of stereotype and stereotyping, I mean the production of images that not only present a simplified representation of a certain ethnic and social group. They also reproduce a specific idea of social order, maintaining boundaries between in-groups and out-groups and – perhaps chiefly – between desirable and undesirable behaviour (Lippmann 1922: 95–96; Dyer 1993: 16). By identifying the recurring features of the stereotypical image of the Tatar pedlar in Finland, I explore what this image tells us about the society and the media that produced it.

The first textual descriptions of encounters with Tatars in Finland appeared in the Finnish press in the 1850s and 1860s. During the Crimean War (1853–1856), the Russian military was also observed in Finland and some recruits were identified as Tatars by the newspaper *Suometar* (22.12.1854: 3). In the 1870s, Tatar traders started to appear in Finnish marketplaces. Some journalists reported negatively on the "repulsive phenomenon" of Tatars running around inns and restaurants, offering "horrible skin rugs" for sale and giving offence through their "rough behaviour" (*Helsingfors* 3.10.1879: 2). Their arrival reminded some authors of "the world-famous market in Nizhny Novgorod" (*Itä-Suomen Sanomat* 9.10.1896: 3). Indeed, the origins

of several of these itinerant traders were a handful of Mishär Tatar villages in the Sergach district in Nizhny Novgorod province.

In the 1880s and 1890s, descriptions of markets in most newspapers were coloured by paternalism and economic protectionism. Newspaper editors often represented the interests of local elites, such as businessmen who resented the competition, priests and educators who were concerned about the decline in public morals and local officials who advocated law and order. The fledgling papers of the labour movement also had little reason to approve of free trade. The articles emphasized the foreignness of Tatars and other itinerant traders. "That merchant's appearance alone shows that he is not a citizen of this country", states an article entitled "A New Scourge of the Land" (*Mikkeli-lehti* 16.3.1898: 2). The author describes the Tatar pedlar as "a shortish man, with a somewhat stumped gait, darkly yellow face, usually pock-marked". The clothing appears to be untidy: "A tattered fur hat […] a belted caftan, dirty, tall boots on his feet." The market goods are packed in a bundle; the Tatar's bundle reappears in cartoons of the era, where it is usually white and carried on the back. It is easily spread out in front of potential customers anywhere and anytime and just as quickly it can be swept up again. Descendants of the first Tatar pedlars in Finland also mention the bundle in their reminiscences (Belyaev 2017: 78).

The small trade of the Tatars happened in a legal grey zone. Itinerant trade was illegal for non-citizens in Finland, but local authorities often lacked means or motivation to pursue lawbreakers (Wassholm & Sundelin 2018: 133). Attitudes were dependent on changes in the political climate. In the spring of 1899, rural police were instructed to round up Russian subjects practising illegal peddling (Tommila 1999: 247–248; Polvinen 1984: 213–215). The Russification measures in 1900 included a decree which legalized itinerant trade in Finland for Russian subjects, but this decree was revoked temporarily in 1905 (Wassholm & Sundelin 2018: 145). Newspapers could not openly criticize the proposal, but they could publish it juxtaposed with seemingly unrelated content, such as the Russian proverb: "An uninvited guest is worse than a Tatar" (*Pohjois-Karjala* 22.12.1900: 2).

Authorities fluctuated between accepting legalization and using vagrancy laws to circumvent it (*Uusi Aura* 7.11.1908: 3; *Vapaa Sana* 9.11.1908: 2). In 1912, the Russian Duma unilaterally imposed an Equality Act on Finland, but the Finnish authorities refused to ratify it and denied several applications by Russian subjects – including Tatars – for the right to trade in the country. Demands of Russian subjects for trading rights in Finland were interpreted as threats to Finnish autonomy. Tatar traders became enemies by proxy in the patriotic press.

In sum, the first impressions of Tatar traders, as conveyed by Finnish newspapers, were predominantly negative (Kaisko 2012: 96–97). Together with other itinerant traders they personified the rowdy marketplace: "Russians and Tatars are in their element: tongues moving as if they had been greased, eyes are flashing and hands waving, pointing and explaining!" (*Hämeen Sanomat* 25.9.1885: 1). The bundle and costume distinguished the Tatar pedlar from the "rucksack Russians", itinerant traders from the Arkhangelsk and Olonets regions in Russia, who were familiar marketplace visitors (Wassholm & Sundelin 2018: 133). Although the rucksack Russians were accused of spreading rumours and germs, they were sometimes favourably compared with more distant ethnic and religious Others. In contrast, Tatars were categorized as undesirable, like Jews, being "as disgusting […] and otherwise more insolent in behaviour" (*Hämäläinen* 22.5.1889: 3).

Finnish monolingual nationalists might even compare Swedish-speakers, who were ahistorically envisioned as an alien element, to Tatars: "Miserable man without a fatherland like a Jew

or a Tatar" (spoken to a Swedish-speaking peasant-fisherman from Korsnäs in Ostrobothnia) (*Waasan Lehti* 30.6.1881: 4). Finnish-speakers considered it gravely insulting to be called Tatar by Swedish-speakers, especially in front of foreigners (*Iltalehti* 21.10.1919: 1; *Savon Jääkäri* 24.10.1919: 3). Nor were such insults uncommon: "If anyone thinks this is an isolated incident we invite them for their own amusement to try anywhere and particularly at restaurants to ask for a bill in Finnish, and they will soon hear a grumble behind their back: Tatar!" (*Tuulispää* 1.6.1903: 4).

As Mark M. Smith (2006: 66) notes, sensory stereotypes encouraged "unthinking, visceral behaviour" which made racial hierarchies feel like common sense. This recurring stereotypical image of Tatars as unclean and insolent strongly resembles stereotypes of generic Asians from other sources. In Russian fiction of the 1880s and 1890s, Tatars were depicted as either indolent fatalists or savage warriors (Badretdinov 1998). The Janus-faced stereotype of "the Oriental", also found in French and German sources, was transmitted to Finnish public discourse via translations of Western European and Russian literature and press articles. It was part of the "Asiatic stigma" that Finns themselves wished to avoid.

A distinct costume was often part of the stereotypical Tatar appearance. The caftan or long coat, with or without a cloth belt, became a synecdoche for Tatar merchants, or "caftan brothers" (*Uusimaa* 19.4.1899: 2). Because of the unfavourable attention directed at the costume, traders – from the poorest pedlar to the wealthiest merchant – adapted to the demands of the market. In 1899, some Finnish newspapers noticed that Tatar merchants in the city of Tampere had "shed their skin" and put on a Western overcoat: "The Asiatic caftan was left at home", the newspaper added, implying that it had not been completely discarded (*Åbo Underrättelser* 22.4.1899: 2).

Some typical features of stereotypes of the racial Other emphasize differences in physiological features, such as hue and stature. Other features relate to acquired characteristics that imply moral defects, such as dirtiness as a sign of carelessness and lack of education (*Tuulispää* 17.11.1916: 5). Dirt could be metaphorical, as Tatars were not only accused of dishonest business methods but also the spread of "dangerous teachings" and other suspicious activities with political implications (*Tampereen Sanomat* 11.4.1899: 3; *Tampereen Uutiset* 13.4.1899: 3–4). The negative descriptions of the pedlars' appearances contrasted with the obvious attraction of their goods, something described as close to magic: "When the Tatar […] spreads his wares in front of us, we are often powerless, completely bewitched and buy things that we would be better off without" (*Pyrkijä* 19.9.1913: 3).

Paradoxically, earlier travel accounts often described Volga Tatars as fastidious and neat. Linguist M.A. Castrén enjoyed the sight of Tatar villages on one of his journeys between Kazan and the Ural Mountains (*Morgonbladet* 7.8.1845: 4). Another scholar, August Ahlqvist, reported favourably that Tatars were clean, calm and honest in trade (*Suometar* 13.6.1856: 2). As the traveller noted, "The enjoyment of the lover of education is not small when he sees an old and poor Tatar read books in his own language with greater ease than his peers […] in Finland" (*Suometar* 20.6.1856: 2–3). When Tatar traders started to frequent markets in Finland, the contrast was noted between the handsome merchants of Kazan and the simple village pedlars (*Laatokka* 13.4.1882: 2). In later travel accounts, Tatars were contrasted favourably with Russians, rather than with Finnish commoners (*Uusi Aura* 19.8.1913: 5).

VISUALIZING THE OTHER

Mass images can be defined as images that are produced within the culture industry or mass culture, following Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. More specifically, according to Lena Johannesson (1988: 228), they are illustrations "intended for mass communication/mass distribution and/or mass consumption". The establishment of a specific ethnic stereotype of the Tatars in Finnish satirical periodicals happened in the years following the abolition of censorship in 1906. This stereotype was reproduced textually, visually in drawings and even as a stage costume in live performances.

The stage costume seems to have been created in the early 1910s by J. Alfred Tanner, a vaudeville actor and songwriter whose interpretations of ethnic stereotypes included minstrel figures in blackface as well as localized characters. His "Tatar" act was praised for its "artistic exactitude" (*Karjalan Sanomat* 14.4.1914: 2). A critic from 1917 lauded Tanner's performance at a rural vaudeville show as an instance of successful stereotyping: "Surely the Tatar himself cannot look more like a Tatar than Mr Tanner" (*Lahti* 25.3.1917: 2). Judging by photos published several years later, Tanner's Tatar character wore a skullcap and a long coat and he carried the characteristic cloth bundle on his back. Beardless, he beckoned the viewer with his finger and a wide smile (Tanner 1947: 17). In a persiflage on the popular song *Orientens Ros* (Rose of the Orient), the Tatar called for customers in a mix of Finnish and Swedish tinted with Russian words and pronunciations (Tanner 1947: 170–171). The only Tatar feature in this macaronic dialect was the character's name, Haidulla, inspired by actual Tatar names of the era, and the character's travel route: Petrograd – Moscow – Kazan.

A strikingly similar "Tatar" figure was contrasted with other racist stereotypes in a *Tuulispää* cartoon relating to an international incident in 1907, when a group of Finns had been detained at the Stockholm harbour by Swedish authorities (*Tuulispää* 9.8.1907: 1; Figure 1). In the cartoon, the Finns can be identified by their respectable headwear (top hats for the men and a straw hat for the woman turning towards the viewer), while the non-Finns in the foreground sport distinctive costumes and physiognomies that mark them as less Western. The Tatar has slanted eyes, prominent ears and a wide smile reminiscent of Yellow Peril stereotypes; he wears a *tubetey* skullcap and a belted caftan and carries a bundle on his shoulder. The Russian has a big beard and a *furashka* (peaked cap) and he is equipped with a caftan, a bundle and a teapot. The third Other, an antisemitic stereotype, is labelled "Israel-Jew".

The Tatar, the Russian and the Jew are implied to receive privileged treatment, while the Finns are unfairly discriminated against. To belabour the point, two other ethnic figures are depicted as walking towards the police station behind the column of arrested Finns: a Gypsy and a stereotypical "Chinaman" with a shaved head in front and a long braid in back. According to the cartoon's caption, the message is: "Western races: Tatars, Jews, Gypsies, are welcome; Finns – get out!" The Eastern mobile traders are lumped together as subjects of the Russian Empire, undesired yet impossible to get rid of as long as Finland is subservient to Russia. The drawing does not protest racism in general; it is a protest against a perceived racial hierarchy that places Finns on a lower level than Tatars, Jews and Russians.

In 1908, the Socialist *Kurikka* was charged with blasphemy for a cartoon of a nativity scene with the caption "If Bethlehem had been in Finland" (*Kurikka* [Kurikan joulunumero 24] 1.12.1908: 13; Figure 2). The relatively clumsy illustration was described in the press as showing "the interior of a peasant cottage, in which is seen the Virgin Mary in the costume of a Finnish peasant woman with a child at her breast. On the floor, in front of the woman, three men are lying: a Jew, a Tatar


TUULISPÄÄ

N:o 32. — 5:des vuosik. Elokuun 9 p. 1907. Hinta 15 p.

Suomalaisten kohtelu Tukholmassa.

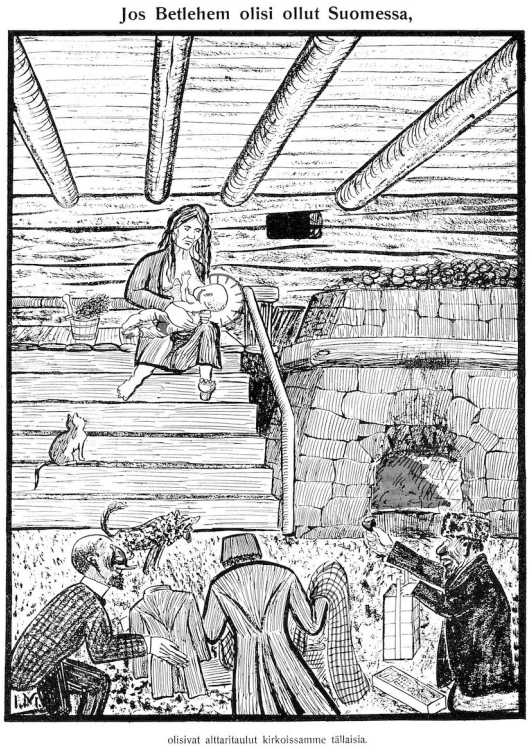
POLIS

POLIS STATION

RUSKI

Länsimaiset rodut: tattarit, juutalaiset, mustalaiset tervetulleita; suomalaiset — *ut!*

Figure 1 Detained Finns at the Stockholm harbour. *Tuulispää* 9.8.1907.


Jos Betlehem olisi ollut Suomessa,

olisivat alttaritaulut kirkoissamme tällaisia.

Figure 2 Nativity scene. *Kurikka* [Kurikan joulunumero 24] 1.12.1908.

and a Finnish peasant, who apparently represent the three holy kings offering their gifts" (*Kansan Ääni* 6.4.1909: 2). The charge was overturned, for "although the picture was crude and offensive, there was nothing blasphemous about it" (*Vapaus* 12.6.1909: 3). The defendant explained that the "localization" of the nativity scene could hardly be deemed blasphemous, as Jesus had previously been depicted wearing a Finnish peasant costume and birch-bark shoes (*Helsingin Sanomat* 12.6.1909: 6).

The newspaper description is not entirely accurate. The drawing shows the interior of a sauna, the traditional place of giving birth, also mentioned in Finnish folk verse as the birthplace of Christ. At least one commentator identified the drawing correctly as a "sauna picture" (*Sosialisti* 13.6.1909: 3). Mary is sitting at the very top of the sauna bench, next to the stove beside a traditional wooden pail and a sauna whisk. The bare-headed Jew on the left offers Jesus and his mother a ready-to-wear jacket and the Tatar in the middle, wearing a *tubetey* cap and a long coat, presents a piece of fabric. The Finnish peasant to the right could also be interpreted as a rucksack Russian. He is holding an item that looks like a box with removable compartments, possibly containing buttons and coils of thread or yarn. These little details indicate that the characters are intended to represent foreign itinerant traders. The incomplete description of the cartoon conveyed by the Finnish news press shows that a contemporary audience did not always notice intentional details in a picture.

These two cartoons may have differed in their political purposes – one criticizing discrimination of Finns abroad, the other satirizing social inequality – but both placed Tatars and other itinerant traders in the same category of transnational Others. Their imagined ability to cross borders between nations with greater ease and despite their outsider status even to enter the most Finnish

of places, the sauna, was potentially offensive but could be utilized to shame Finnish authorities into action (to protect the rights of Finnish citizens abroad, or to show greater concern for the poor).

PUTTING THEM IN "THEIR" PLACE

The visual stereotype of the Tatar could be used to show that a Finnish person was acting like an offensive outsider crossing the limits of decency. Using the transgressive behaviour of the Other to shame the imagined reader into action has been identified as a strategy of "education through reproach" (Valenius 2004: 190). While this "black pedagogy" (Apo 1998: 90, 108) was usually used by the elite towards the common people, the satirical journals were arguably addressing an elite or semi-elite audience of educated urban readers. They frequently utilized stereotypes to attack their peers, political opponents or superiors.

The year 1905 sent waves of uproar and terror through the Russian Empire. Finland received its share of political violence and propaganda after Eugen Schauman's assassination of Governor General Nikolai Bobrikov in 1904. In early 1905, Lennart Hohenthal assassinated the Chancellor of Justice, Eliel Soisalon-Soininen. Now a Finnish citizen had killed a fellow citizen, albeit an official who had been accused of appeasement. Women's rights activist Alexandra Gripenberg began collecting signatures against political fratricide. *Fyren* mocked her efforts with a drawing referring to the petition panic of 1899 (*Fyren* 18.3.1905: 4; Figure 3).

In the *Fyren* cartoon, Gripenberg, as the Tatar "Gripenbulla", was depicted chasing children outside a school and even pulling a schoolgirl's plait. In 1899, Tatars had been accused of collecting signatures for obscure purposes by luring children with money and sweets and chasing young girls (*Aamulehti* 8.4.1899: 2–3; *Wiipuri* 19.4.1899: 2; *Sanomia Turusta* 14.4.1899: 2; *Päivälehti* 13.4.1899: 3). The gathering of signatures was suspected to be a counter-measure to the Great Petition, which had been presented to Emperor Nicholas II to protest the Russification policies in the February Manifesto. One way to identify the suspicious signature collectors was their "Tatar costume" (*Päivälehti* 8.4.1899: 3).

Figure 3 Petition panic in 1899. *Fyren* 18.3.1905.

Attacks on Tatars were soon reported. In Tampere, a Tatar pedlar was beaten up by youngsters. The boys confiscated a dubious piece of paper with scribblings and the local police rewarded them with 5 Finnish marks each. The pedlar was interrogated but since his papers were in order he was released (*Tampereen Sanomat* 26.4.1899: 2–3). A Tatar merchant in Tampere sued a newspaper that had slandered the local Tatars, but the case was dismissed. Many newspapers, eager to defend what little freedom of expression they had, mocked his case (*Kansalainen* 15.5.1899: 3). The petition panic also provided an occasion to criticize officials, especially those who were suspected of being pro-Russian, for lack of action (*Aamulehti* 13.4.1899: 3).

As the petition panic culminated in April 1899, it reached the level of conspiracy theory. The newspaper *Satakunta* (25.4.1899: 3) published a dialogue entitled "The Tatar's Invention", where three Tatars conspired to fake enough signatures in order to claim that the entire Finnish population had converted to Islam. The humorous dialogue did not purport to present facts. However, some articles dealing with the petition panic implied that the collection of names had been part of a greater plan. In 1900, a column in the conservative *Uusi Aura* (27.7.1900: 1) claimed that there had been a never-before-seen influx of migrant pedlars in 1899, "just as on a secret signal". Tatars and other migrant pedlars were used as a covert way to speak of the Russian authorities. The phrase "scratch a Russian and find a Tatar", coined in France during Napoleon's reign, was already familiar to Finnish newspaper readers (*Maakansa* 18.6.1910: 3). Curiously, theatre censorship even encouraged swapping all mentions of *ryssä* (a derogatory term for Russian) for *turkkilainen* (a Turk) (Seppälä 2016: 49).

In the 1905 cartoon, the artist Alex Federley drew Alexandra Gripenberg in Tatar costume, consisting of a black *tubetey* cap and caftan as well as strangely pointed footwear, carrying a white bundle with the label: "Mandate by 'The Women of Finland'". The pointed shoes were most likely a visual reference to the cartoon character *Suometar-Mamma* (Old Grandma Finland). Cartoons in *Fyren* often featured this grotesque female personification of *Uusi Suometar*, the newspaper of the Finnish Party. This political party represented conservative and clerical nationalism and was accused of appeasement tactics towards Russia. Federley drew *Suometar-Mamma* as a racialized "ugly Finn" with a flat, upturned nose, high cheekbones and an angry scowl. The upturned shoes were part of her ethnic outfit (Valenius 2004: 164–204).

Historian Helen Chenut analyses depictions of well-known feminists in male attire in French *Belle Époque* caricatures. Similar to the way in which Federley depicted Gripenberg, French cartoonists showed feminist militants as physically aggressive and violent with bodies taking up too much space (Chenut 2012: 442–450). A common feature of the Tatar stereotype and the image of the modern woman was their being physically displaced. The Tatar appeared in the wrong place at the wrong moment, but always with the same single-minded goal: "– Buy a fine cheap thing, said the Tatar, opening the attic door" (*Tuulispää* 1.7.1904: 7). The point of this one-liner joke was that the Tatar trader was an intruder, pursuing his customers everywhere, even into clearly inappropriate places such as churches and prayer rooms (*Turun Lehti* 9.11.1897: 3). Just as the ethnic Other transgressed national borders and the limits between public and private, the gendered Other transgressed the limits of decency – to the point of compromising patriotic values.

FINNISH WOMEN AND TATAR MEN

In the early phase of the itinerant trade, pedlars often brought their goods to the inner yards of city houses and farmsteads and into the semi-public sphere where women did their daily chores. This led to encounters between Finnish women and strange men, a matter of some concern in the

press. Sometimes the meetings developed into closer relationships. In 1902, a girl was accused of immoral behaviour for attempting to go to the cinema in the company of a Tatar man (*Tampereen Uutiset* 28.1.1902: 3). An editorial comment to a news item about a Finnish woman wanting to wed a Tatar man, even though Finnish church law did not permit marriages between Christians and Muslims, mocked the woman: "[She] had to get a man at any price" (*Uusi Aura* 10.2.1910: 3).

A humorous episode where an attractive scarf served as a pretext for transgression of class and ethnic borders was set in rural Ostrobothnia. A lady preparing for the autumnal move from the country to the city residence is cleaning the house, wearing simple attire. A young Tatar pedlar, beardless like the cartoon depictions, arrives with his characteristic bundle. He offers her a colourful scarf, but she refuses with the explanation that she usually wears a hat. "You shouldn't wear a hat!" he exclaims, to her class-conscious delight. If he assumes that she is a servant, his reaction is entirely proper. A servant should not imitate her betters. Still, she must correct his mistaken impression: she is not a servant, she is a lady. He grows bolder and proposes to take her to Russia with him. The lady wonders whether she should be afraid, but the young man looks "so childish" that she feels safe to continue flirting. However, when she decides that the game is over, the Tatar only becomes more insistent. The tension is interrupted by the return of her husband. The thwarted suitor meekly leaves with his bundle on his back (*Syd-Österbotten* 1.6.1907: 3).

The encounters did not always play out harmlessly. One of the last cartoons depicting a Tatar pedlar appeared in *Kurikka* in 1915. Hjalmar Löfving illustrated a short story combining elements of class prejudice and sexism. A bourgeois lady wants to buy a scarf from a visiting Tatar pedlar, but the proposed price is too high. Instead, she suggests that the pedlar can spend the night with her. In the morning, the pedlar refuses to hand over the scarf, quipping: "I had a good time and you had a good time – no scarf for you!" (*Kurikka* 15.10.1915: 4; Figure 4). The visual elements of this figure are familiar from previous cartoons and from J. Alfred Tanner's stage costume. The Tatar is beardless and his face is round with slanted eyes, a small nose and a wide mouth. He is carrying a big white bundle and his dark caftan is belted.

Figure 4 Tatar pedlar and a bourgeois lady. *Kurikka* 15.10.1915.

During the First World War, both the left- and the right-wing press teemed with descriptions and depictions of Finnish women flirting with foreign soldiers and workers who were brought into the country from far-off corners of the Russian Empire (Karemaa 1998: 58–60). In vaudeville songs, the hypersexual Russian soldier and his willing Finnish girlfriend became stock characters (Seppälä 2016: 50–53). Political and moral anxieties focused on women's sexual mores. Anything can do, "even a Tatar", a jealous husband gibbers drunkenly in a one-line joke (*Kurikka* 1.2.1916: 7). In the worst-case scenarios, newspapers claimed that "a new race" (*Länsi-Suomi* 25.9.1917: 2) was being bred by "chaste maidens of Finland" and "Chinese, Tatars, Kalmyks and God knows what else" (*Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* 16.6.1917: 3). In Jarl Hemmer's novelization of the life of Civil War child-soldier Onni Kokko, one of the steps towards the boy's radicalization is his hatred of his older sister's fiancé, a Russian soldier with "Tatar eyes" (Hemmer 1920: 70, 89, 186).

Tatar pedlars and traders were, however, relatively rarely depicted as sexual aggressors. In satirical cartoons and verses, Finnish women of every social class appeared as the initiators of relations. Satirists condemned the women for immoral behaviour, rather than depicting the men as aggressors. In contrast, political cartoons personified the country of Finland as a "maid in distress" menaced by masculine foreign powers (Valenius 2004: 124–163). The threat of rape was mainly present as a political metaphor and it was not used to arouse pity or anger on behalf of individual women (Valenius 2004: 151; Karemaa 1998: 23–24). Even if attacked by men in the street or in her own home, the ordinary Finnish woman was thought to be strong enough to defend herself so energetically that a policeman would be needed to rescue the male aggressor instead (*Suomen Kansa* 25.5.1905: 3; *Tuulispää* 2.6.1905: 2). The treatment of rape as equivalent to seduction is also evidence of a taboo around sexual violence and a misogynistic tendency to blame the victim. In a report about a girl who defended herself successfully against assault by two Finnish men, an anonymous editor added that some people might wonder if she would have decided differently if she had met with "yellow-faced, dirty, slanty-eyed, or flea-bitten Orientals" (*Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* 16.6.1917: 3).

FORGETTING THE OTHER

In independent Finland after 1917, the only surviving trace of the Tatar pedlar stereotype was J. Alfred Tanner's vaudeville character. The stage Tatar lived on for a surprisingly long time in gramophone recordings and nostalgic revivals of Tanner's act. Tatars themselves seem to have disappeared out of sight by the 1920s. Articles that remarked upon their existence in Finland mostly consisted of the author's display of ignorance. For example, the vicar Wilhelm Hagfors wrote in 1924:

> As far as I know, there is not a single educated Tatar in Finland. In Helsinki, they have a private prayer room. We will see whether the question will arise to get civil rights to Tatars born in Finland. It would not be desirable. The Jews have it. The Swedish Party supported it. From the Jews we got a few musicians, of whom we haven't heard since. (*Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* 29.7.1924: 2)

Contrary to Hagfors' statement, Tatars already had the right to apply for Finnish citizenship. Extensive legal reforms were implemented after independence and they changed how religion and religious minorities were treated in Finland. Until then Jews and Muslims had been excluded from the right to citizenship because of their religion. Before the outbreak of the Civil War in January 1918, an Act was passed conceding Jewish residents in Finland the right

to apply for citizenship. Three Muslims filed their applications already in June 1918, but they were dismissed because of their unclear legal status. The 1919 constitution of the Republic of Finland guaranteed freedom of religion and a new act on the naturalization of foreigners took effect in 1920. The first accepted Muslim applicant received his citizenship in June 1920 (Leitzinger 2006: 211–214).

As seen in the above quote, naturalized minorities were expected to deliver something of value to the nation. Excessively visible merchants were perceived to be troublesome, but now the problem seemed to be that Tatars were not visible enough. The attempt to fit the Tatar into a simplistic schema of racial, cultural and directional opposites was doomed to fail when confronted with reality. Because of the small size of the Tatar population in Finland, such confrontations rarely happened. Misconceptions could bloom and wither away in the popular press without intervention from the people who were concerned. Nevertheless, there were attempts by supporters of the Tatar community in Finland, such as the linguist G. J. Ramstedt, to promote a positive image of Tatar culture (Ramstedt 1919: 501–508).

At the same time, I argue that the negative stereotypes of the itinerant trader had become obsolete in the press for two reasons. First, the Tatar community now largely consisted of families who had managed to unite before or during the war years. Many owned their own businesses and had settled in towns. The phenomenon of the single male pedlar or group of market traders sharing temporary lodgings disappeared. The closure of the border to Soviet Russia meant that regular travels to the original villages were, if not impossible, at least fraught with danger. This did not mean that Tatar shops were left unnoticed. Some organizations of Finnish businessmen were still filing complaints about them to the authorities, demanding that something should be done about the foreign competition (*Suomen Työmies* 4.4.1923: 6; *Uusi Aura* 22.11.1923: 2).

Secondly, yet more importantly, the Finnish self-perception underwent a dramatic change. Despite tendencies towards self-Othering or self-Orientalization (Elmgren 2008: 166–168), the country had achieved its independence. Although the process was painful and bloody, the ensuing Civil War was eventually reinterpreted as a "War of Liberty" by its victors in the light of the global struggle against Bolshevism (Roselius 2013). The legend of liberation could be used to prove that the Finns were not racially or historically destined to remain subjugated to other nations. Freedom of expression, as guaranteed by the 1919 constitution, allowed Finnish newspapers to print previously censored anti-Russian texts. This removed some of the political motives for the denigration of Tatars. The development of printing technology and visual media also meant that it became easier to distribute images of tall, blond sportsmen and beauty queens with Western features in order to change the worldwide perception of Finns (Kemiläinen 1993: 364; Lähteenkorva & Pekkarinen 2004: 220–225).

The continued presence of minorities in independent Finland was however to nationalists an uncomfortable reminder of the lack of national cohesion, especially if these minorities started to demand the right to self-determination, as in the case of the Åland islands dispute in 1919–1921. This dispute between Finland and Sweden was resolved through negotiations by the League of Nations. As a result, Finland maintained sovereignty over the islands, which were nevertheless granted extensive cultural and political autonomy. The dispute inspired the following satirical verse in which the right to self-determination was claimed by even smaller minorities who threatened to displace the majority: "When Tatars are granted autonomy / Finns can move to the Lapland fells" (*Tuulispää* 7.2.1919: 5).

CONCLUSIONS

The visual stereotypes of Tatars found in Finnish newspapers and satirical journals served a political purpose as an outlet for tensions. They were used to highlight the contrast between desirable and undesirable behaviour and thus shame political opponents and targets of civilizing efforts through association with the Other. Stereotypes about ethnic and religious minorities like the Tatars fulfilled a political need before the independence of Finland in 1917. As substitute enemy images, the hypervisible Tatar joined the ranks of other disturbing Others who challenged Finnish autonomy but whose names could not be spoken openly. The encounter with the Other was depicted as a form of symbolic violence – and sometimes acts of physical violence – inflicted on the Finns in their own country. In addition, the acceptance of racial hierarchies led by white north-western Europeans made many Finns embrace Orientalist and racist ideas in order to disprove that Finns were related to Tatars and other Eastern peoples. This made the stereotypical Tatar especially useful for cartoonists who sought to convey overt and covert political messages about the proper place of the Finns in power hierarchies and the improper place of others.

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